

Fall 8-15-2010

ENG 4950-001: Literary History

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English 4950 / Fall 2010
Literary History

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Office:
 3345 Coleman Hall
 M 3-4:30, T 1:30-2:30,
 R 11-12, and by appointment

Overview and Objectives

Your education in literature in Eastern's department has mostly been organized around the idea of literary periods. In this course we will examine the reasons for this kind of organization of literature, the problems with it, and what you can do with literary history.

We'll undertake this investigation in three phases. First, we will review the traditional literary historical curriculum and you will reflect on your experience with that curriculum. Next, we will explore the field called book history (which includes the histories of printing, authorship, and publishing) as an alternative way to organize our thinking about particular moments in literary history. Finally, we will explore what literary historical knowledge can add to our appreciation and analysis of contemporary literature.

As a "capstone course," this class is designed to encourage you to synthesize subjects you have studied discretely and to help you to think critically about your education as a whole. In addition, because of our particular subject matter, two important goals of this course are to help you think historically and to encourage you to become self-aware regarding your historical practices in relationship to literature.

Texts from TRS

Ferguson et al., eds., *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*
 Finkelstein & McCleery, eds., *The Book History Reader*

Other Texts

You will be responsible for obtaining self-selected texts for several assignments in this class. For the most part, you should be able to obtain texts you need from Booth Library. Particularly for the final unit, however, you might find you will want to buy one or more books. Please be aware that you may be able to find quite cheap used copies of even recent books (check for used on Amazon, half.com, or Abebooks.com). *If obtaining self-selected texts is ever a problem for you, please let me know. Together we will find an acceptable solution.*

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

The English Department's Statement on Plagiarism

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

Grade Breakdown

Projects	Distribution	Final Grade	
Quizzes & short writings	20%	93-100	A
Presentations (3 @ 5%)	15%	85-92	B
Participation	10%	77-84	C
Essay 1	10%	69-76	D
Essay 2	10%	68 and below	F
Essay 3	20%		
Final Exam	15%		

Quizzes

During the first two units of the course, there will be frequent, short quizzes. These quizzes will cover material presented in readings and in class. If you miss class and there is a quiz the day you return, you will still need to take the quiz. (This is why it's a good idea to have a friend in the class who will share notes with you.) If you miss a quiz, you must take it the same day you return to class.

Short Writings

Like quizzes, short writings will mostly be assigned during the first two units of the course. These writings will be designed to help you prepare for the longer essays, so you should be sure to keep these writings when they are returned to you.

Presentations

During the first unit, I will ask you to make two presentations on topics that you will choose (one on a subject that you have studied previously and one on texts that you are reading for the first time). These will be short presentations, but if you miss the class when you are scheduled to present, you will have to choose a different topic to make up your presentation. The third presentation, given during the last week of classes, will be a brief discussion of your project in the final essay.

Participation

Here's the secret to doing well on participation: Do the work outside class that is assigned, come to class regularly, and raise your hand when you genuinely have something to say. And remember: *Quality* is more important than *quantity*. If you have significant difficulty speaking in class, please consult with me privately early in the semester. Also note: Skipping required individual conferences will significantly lower your final participation grade.

Formal Essays

There are three formal essays in the course. The grading standards will vary slightly, since the assignments will be relatively diverse (see the individual assignments for details). For all three essays, however, I will expect you to show off your best writing skills, including analysis, close reading, informative writing, and expression. In addition, although we will have draft workshops, I expect you will work on your own to revise your writing, edit it, and proofread it. All sources used should be documented according to MLA style.

Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative. Save your quizzes and notes throughout the semester.

Schedule

Readings, homework, and essays are due on the date listed. Although I reserve the right to announce changes to this schedule, in general I will follow it and you should be able to rely on this schedule to know what is due at each class session.

NAP = *Norton Anthology of Poetry*; *BHR* = *Book History Reader*

Unit	Date	Topic/Readings
Overview of British and American Literary History	M Aug 23	Introduction
	W Aug 25	Overview: Backgrounds/Medieval Due: Reflective Writing
	F Aug 27	Overview: Renaissance/17 th Century Due: Reflective Writing
	M Aug 30	Overview: 18 th Century Due: Reflective Writing
	W Sept 1	Overview: Romanticism Due: Reflective Writing
	F Sept 3	Overview: Victorian Era Due: Reflective Writing
	M Sept 6	<i>Labor Day – no class</i>
	W Sept 8	Overview: Modernism and Postmodernism Due: Reflective Writing
	F Sept 10	Overview: American Lit to the Civil War Due: Reflective Writing
	M Sept 13	Overview: American Lit after the Civil War Due: Reflective Writing
	W Sept 15	<i>Conferences:</i> Discuss self-selected readings, presentations, Essay 1 (conferences replace class)
	F Sept 17	Narratives, schematics, timelines, etc. (continue self-selected readings). Quizzes will begin after this date.
	M Sept 20	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)
	W Sept 22	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)
	F Sept 24	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)
	M Sept 27	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)
	W Sept 29	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)
	F Oct 1	<i>Presentations</i> from self-selected readings (schedule TBA)

<i>Book History as Literary History</i>	M Oct 4	<i>Essay 1 due</i> Introduction to Book History unit
	W Oct 6	Overview of Printing History (in course packet)
	F Oct 8	<i>Fall Break – no class</i>
	M Oct 11	Chartier “The Practical Impact of Writing” (<i>BHR</i> 118-143) Due: Reflective Writing
	W Oct 13	Altick, “The English Common Reader” and Rose, “Rereading the English Common Reader” (<i>BHR</i> 340-349 and 324-339)
	F Oct 15	Monaghan, “Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England” (<i>BHR</i> 297-315)
	M Oct 18	Brewer, “Authors, Publishers, and the Making of Literary Culture” (<i>BHR</i> 241-249)
	W Oct 20	Barthes “The Death of the Author” and Foucault “What Is an Author?” (<i>BHR</i> 221-230)
	F Oct 22	Tompkins “Masterpiece Theatre” (<i>BHR</i> 250-258)
	M Oct 25	West, “The Magazine Market” (<i>BHR</i> 269-276)
	W Oct 27	Radway “A Feeling For Books” (<i>BHR</i> 359-371)
	F Oct 29	Online resources Due: Reflective Writing
	M Nov 1	Online resources
	W Nov 3	<i>Conferences</i> about Essay 2
	F Nov 5	Draft workshop
<i>Contemporary Writing and Literary History</i>	M Nov 8	<i>Essay 2 due</i> ; discuss Essay 3
	W Nov 10	<i>Conferences</i> about Essay 3
	F Nov 12	Reading day
	M Nov 15	Small group meetings re: final readings
	W Nov 17	Small group meetings re: final readings
	F Nov 19	Small group meetings re: final readings
	Nov 22-26	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
	M Nov 29	<i>Conferences</i> about Essay 3
	W Dec 1	<i>Conferences</i> about Essay 3
	F Dec 3	Draft workshop for Essay 3
	M Dec 6	<i>Essay 3 due; presentations</i>
	W Dec 8	<i>Presentations</i> continued
<i>Final Exam</i>	F Dec 10	Review for final exam
	Final Exam T Dec 14, 10:15- 12:15	<i>Final Exam</i>